

On Mount Moriah

Frank G. Carpenter Describes the Site of Solomon's Temple, Which is the Oldest Spot Upon Earth

By FRANK G. CARPENTER

How the Temple Was Built, and Something About Its Successors—The Temple of Herod the Great in Which Christ Preached—A Mohammedan Mosque Now on the Site and Christians Admitted Only With Guards—Some Moslem Traditions—Where Gabriel Will Blow His Trumpet—The Dome of the Rock. (Copyright, 1910, by Frank G. Carpenter.)

JERUSALEM.
I want to take you this morning to the summit of Mount Moriah and show you the site of Solomon's Tem-

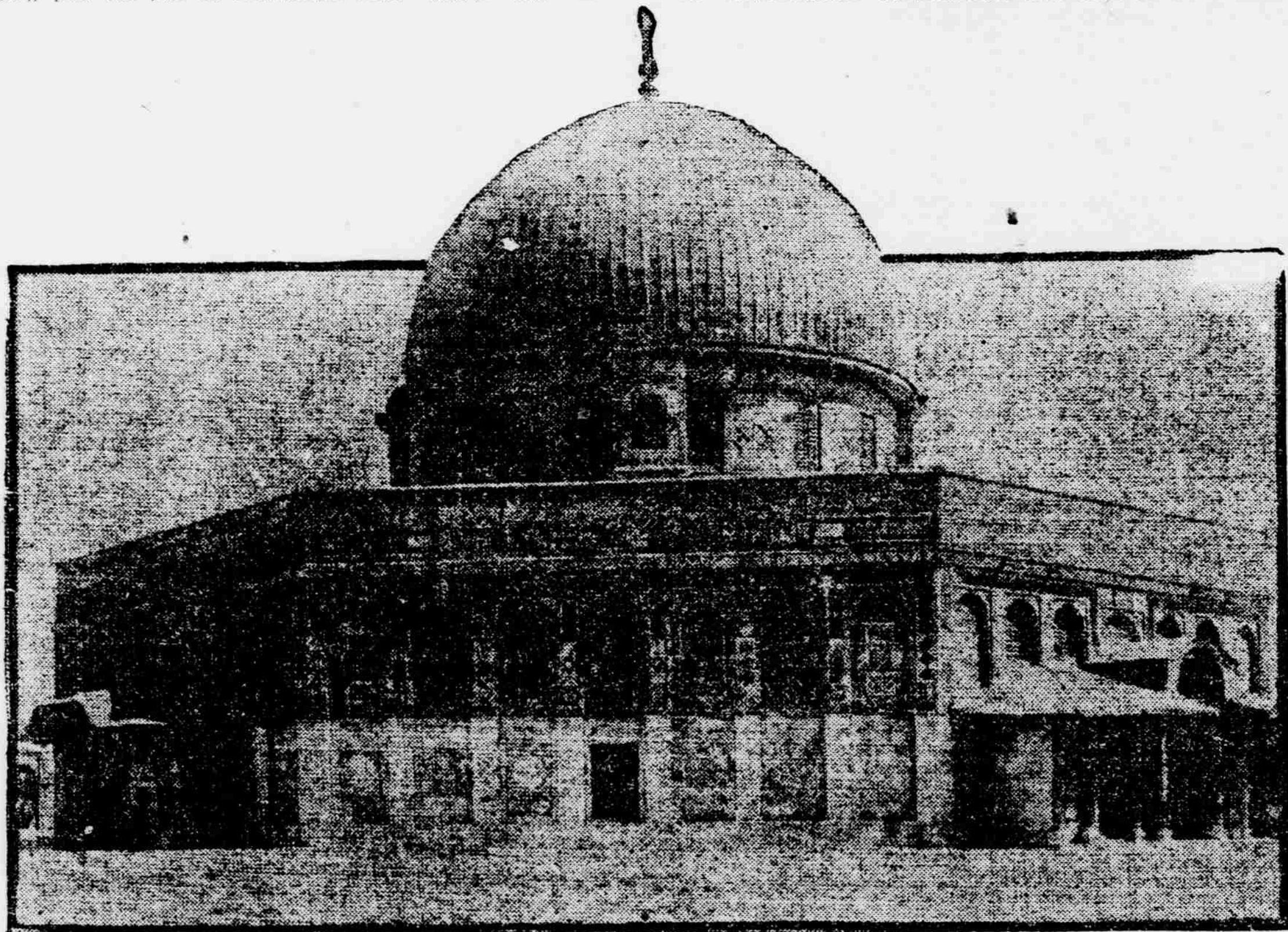
ple, which now stands inside the mosque on the top of Moriah. This is also a Jewish superstition, the statement being that as the Lord saw the solid earth rising out of chaos He blessed these two spots and said:

"They shall be great in the history of the human race, which I shall create, and upon one of them shall my holy city be built."

Where Solomon Built His Temple.
Mount Moriah is on the eastern edge of Jerusalem proper. It is just opposite the Mount of Olives and above the Gethsemane

our Savior, and on through a vaulted tunnel-like street which was once the cotton bazaar, but which now sells everything else. At the end of this tunnel we ascend a stairway and find ourselves on the plateau now devoted to the Mosque of Omar, but formerly the site of the Temple of Solomon.

In Solomon's Stables.
The plateau of the temple rises in terraces. We first enter that which was known as the Court of Gentiles, and was open to Jew and Gentile alike. From this we go up to the Court of Israelites and then to the Court of



ple. It is on the same spot where Abraham, at the command of the Lord was about to sacrifice his only son, Isaac, when he was told to desist and shown the ram whose horns were caught in the thicket behind him. It is the place where the wisdom of the boy Christ astonished the wise men; where David, Solomon and Elijah were in the habit of praying, and where, according to the Mohammedans, the blast of the trumpet will sound forth at the day of judgment. The site is sacred to both Christians and Mohammedans, and it may be called the holiest on the face of the globe.

The geologists say that Mount Moriah is one of the two oldest parts of the world, the other being Mount Sinai, upon which Moses received the commandments. They prove this by the rocks, saying that when the world was thrown off by the sun and floated about in its nebulous state through the air the parts which first solidified were the summit of Sinai and the rock

across the valley of Jehosaphat. The wall of the city runs around its slope and its top is a plateau containing thirty-five acres or about one-seventh of the whole of Jerusalem inside the walls. The walls partially bound this plateau and in them at the northeast corner of it is the gate through which St. Stephen went when he was stoned to death by the Jews. On the opposite side of the plateau and far down below it is the Jews' wailing place, and hugging it on the west, south and north are the box-shaped limestone houses which form the greater part of Jerusalem.

In going to it we leave our hotel on Mount Zion and make our way down David street through a horde of pilgrims of all colors, races and sexes. We pass the church of the Holy Sepulchre, go through a bazaar where men and women sitting on the ground are selling glass bracelets and beads from Hebron, past candle shops whose wares are to be burnt at the tomb of

the Priests, which is now under the great Mosque of Omar. It was in the latter court that the open-air altar for burnt offerings stood, or in fact, the very rock upon which Abraham tied Isaac when he was about to burn him, obeying the Lord.

Before we examine the plateau itself I want to take you down underground. There is said to have been seven Jerusalems which have been built and destroyed and rebuilt again. The Holy City has a subterranean region, many parts of which have been excavated, exposing wonderful ruins. Right under the temple platform is a catacomb of great tanks, and the walls are said to go down many feet. There are steps at one place, and descending them we come into a wilderness of vaults, whose roofs are upheld by pillars and arches of stone. Some of the stone blocks are of enormous size. I have measured one which is eight feet wide and fifteen feet high. These stones are beautifully laid. They are closely joined and show mechanical ingenuity in their construction. The pillars are about four feet square, and some of them have holes bored through the corners. It is claimed that the vaults were constructed by Solomon for his stables, and that the holes in the columns were the tying places for the horses. In some of the vaults are stone mangers, which the guides claim were used long ago. Others say that this stable story is a fiction, and that the excavations were made in erecting the temple and the great columns put up to sustain its platform. But, however that may be, the architecture is wonderful, and it should be considered so now. There are altogether a hundred or more vaults, and the mighty stones which wall them are so heavy that it would be impossible to handle them at the present time without the use of machinery.

Guarded by Mohammedan Soldiers.

But, before we go farther, I must tell you about the escort which guards us as we move about this great Christian shrine. Like the rest of Jerusalem, it now belongs to the Mohammedans, and is one of the places which Christians are not permitted to visit without the permission of the Turkish governor of the city. This I have gotten through the American consul. The governor has also given me a Mohammedan soldier and the consul has sent along his chief kavass, the two to

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act as our guards. The soldier has a sword at his side, and the kavass is armed with a scimitar and an ebony club, finished at the top in a knob of silver as big as my fist. The kavass is one of the major-domos, or soldiers of the American consulate. Our consul has two of them, and they accompany him wherever he goes upon state occasions. They are tall, straight Syrians, more gorgeously clad than Solomon in his glory. They have vests covered with gold embroidery, coats with long sleeves and trousers of the zouave order, each leg of which contains enough cloth to make a trained skirt for a lady. I have made a photograph of the consul with his kavasses standing beside him. He looks like a prisoner with the kavasses as guards.

The Mosque of Omar.
It is the Mohammedan guides that enable us to visit the Mosque of Omar, which was supposed by the Crusaders to be Solomon's Temple. It was actually built as a cathedral by the Christian emperors who reigned at Constantinople, and is one of the most specimens of Byzantine architecture. When it was constructed it was dedicated to the Virgin Mary, but about thirteen hundred years ago, when Omar captured Jerusalem, he turned it into a Mohammedan mosque, and so it is to this day.

Imagine a mighty dome of greenish copper, on the top of which is a golden crescent. Let this be as large, or larger than that of the capitol at Washington, and let it rest upon a vast octagonal temple walled with tiles so fine that any one of them would be prized as a piece of rare china. Let there be a dado of marble below the tiles and a wide frieze above them, inlaid with Arabic characters containing texts from the Koran, and let the whole be entered by mighty doors, over which are arches of carvings, and you have a faint idea of the Dome of the Rock, the name by which this mosque is known.

The Mohammedans Believe in Christ.

Here may be seen striking evidences of the belief that the Mohammedans hold as to Christ and the prophets. They believe in Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and class Jesus as one of the prophets, although not so high, perhaps, as Mohammed. In the verses of the Koran on the front of the mosque is one saying: "The Messiah, Jesus, the only son of Mary, the ambassador of God, and His word which He deposited in Mary. Believe, then, in God and His ambassador, and do not maintain that in one there are three." Another reads: "Blessings be on me in the day of my birth and my death. He is Jesus, the Son of Mary, the word of truth, concerning whom some are in doubt." There are other passages of the Koran which give the stories of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob, and the Mohammedans reverence this spot in connection with them.

Where Gabriel Will Blow His Trumpet.

But let us take off our shoes and go in. The floor of the mosque is holy ground and none is permitted to enter except in his stocking or bare feet. The inside is even more beautiful than that without. The walls and roofs are a mass of carvings and mosaics. The mosaic is made up of bits of gold and glass, the latter of many colors, all so delicately put together that they form beautiful paintings. Each bit is as big as the head of a nail, or smaller, and thousands of them are required to make each of the pictures. The columns which uphold the roof are of marble, and the floor is of marble, carpeted with old rugs from Turkey and Persia.

Right in the center of the mosque is the huge rock upon which Abraham built his altar for Isaac, and upon it, the Mohammedans say, the angel Gabriel will stand when he blows the last trumpet calling the people to judgment. At that time, according to them, the souls of the human race will rush to this spot and present themselves before Mohammed and Christ, who will pass on their virtues and sins. After that all must go to the pillar of judgment and cross a wire rope to the Mount of Olives, and thence up to heaven or down into hell. The wicked will fall in the crossing. According to another Mohammedan story, the Moslems will be turned into fleas and Mohammed himself into a sheep, in which shape he will ascend to heaven with the Mohammedan dead. (Continued on page sixteen.)



By Mohammedan Escort.

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